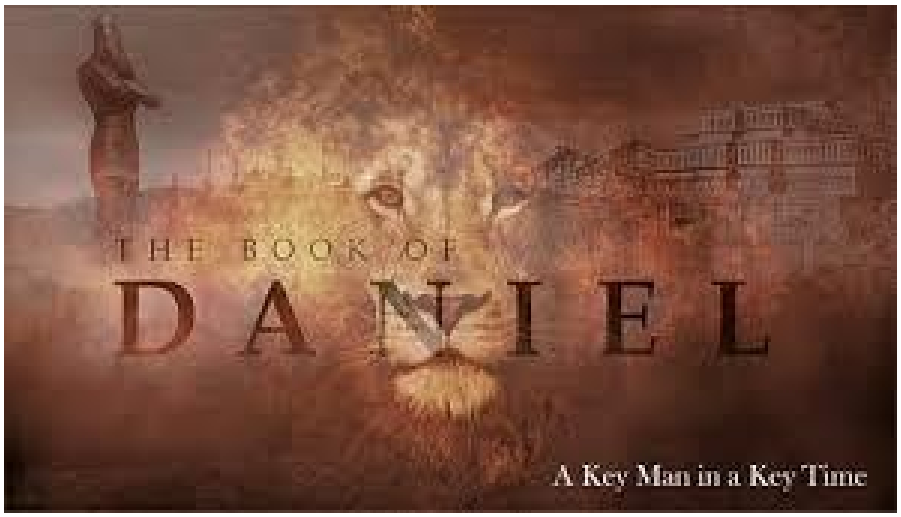
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Dani’el from a Messianic Jewish Perspective

*To my great granddaughter Olivia, may she grow up strong in **ADONAI**, and like Queen Esther, stand up for herself and her **Lord**. May she grow up to be wise and **a wife of noble character (Proverbs 31:10-31)**, like her mother.*



Author and Date: Several verses indicate that **Dani’el**, whose name means *God is my Judge,* wrote this book **(8:15** and **27, 9:2, 10:2 and 7**, and **12:4-5)**. He wrote in the autobiographical first person from **7:2** on and should be distinguished from the three other **Dani’el’s** in the TaNaKh **(First Chronicles 3:1; Ezra 8:2;** and **Nehemiah 10:6)**. As a teenager, possibly around fifteen years old, **Dani’el** was taken captive, virtually kidnapped, from **his** noble family in Judah (see the commentary on **Jeremiah, to see link click Gt – In the 37th Year, Jehoiachin Released from Prison**). He and other young **Jewish** men were deported to Babylon to be brainwashed into the **Babylonian** culture for the task of assisting in dealing with other imported **Jews**. There, **Dani’el** spent the rest of **his** life (eighty-five years or more) and made the most of **his** exile, successfully praising **ADONAI** by **his** character and service. **Dani’el** quickly rose to the role of statesman by official royal appointment and served as a confidante of kings as well as **a prophet** in two world empires – **the Babylonian Empire (2:48)** and **the Medo-Persian Empire (6:1-2)**. **Dani’el** lived beyond the time described in **10:1** (536 BC). It

seems more probable that he wrote the book shortly after this date, but before 530 BC in the sixth century.[1]

Purpose: Three main purposes of **Dani'el** may be listed. First, the book describes how **Jews** should live in a **Gentile** world, particularly while **the Torah** is still a blueprint for living (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Bk – The Ten Words**). Second, the book gives us a valuable lesson about **YHVH**, **the God** of **Isra'el**. **He** was, by pagan standards, a defeated god. In general, **Gentiles** viewed the wars he fought with other nations as wars between national gods. If one nation triumphed over another, its god triumphed over the other god. Therefore, in the minds of **the Babylonians**, **the God** of **Isra'el** had been defeated by **their god**, but **Dani'el** showed **them** that the opposite was true. Third, the book demonstrates **ADONAI's** provision for **His people**. **Ha'Shem** placed **Dani'el** in a unique position. **The prophet** spent all of **the Babylonian Captivity** in **Babylon** (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Gu – Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**). **His** prominent position at the court of both Nebuchadnezzar and his successor, allowed **him** to consider the welfare of the captive **Jews**. This, in turn, proves that **the LORD** does not forsake **His people**.[2]

Theme: The primary theme of the book of **Dani'el** is the period known as **the Times of the Gentiles**. The book also deals with **God's** program for **Isra'el** during this period. It's focus, however, is on the development of world history from the destruction of **Jerusalem** and **the Babylonian Captivity** in 586 BC to **the Second Coming of Messiah** – from the dethronement of **Zedekiah**, the last **king** of **Judah**, to the enthronement of **Yeshua Messiah**, the last **King** of **Isra'el**.[3] To see a short video summarizing the book of **Dani'el** click **here**.

The Chronology: **Dani'el** is one of the most significant books in the Bible in terms of the chronology of future events because **it** contains essential information concerning the key figures and time sequences of **the far eschatological future**. It is difficult to understand prophetic chronology without consulting the book of **Dani'el**. There are visions in **Dani'el** that detail what **YHVH** would do beginning in the sixth century BC until **the Messianic Kingdom**. Thus, **Dani'el** can be seen as the foundation for the key themes of biblical prophecy. **Dani'el** did not attempt to write history when **he** wrote **his** book; rather, **he** was developing a theme. Therefore, the book was not written in chronological order. The fact that **Dani'el** dated **his** prophecies, provides insight into the order in which the events took place, but they were not written in that order. So I have written this commentary in this

order: **Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 5, 9, 6,** and **10-12**.[4]

Languages: An unusual feature of the book is that it is written in two languages. From **Chapter 2 verse 4** to **Chapter 7 verse 28**, the book is written in **Aramaic** because the focus is on **the Gentile nations**. But **Dani'el Chapter 1 verse 1** to **Chapter 2 verse 3** and **Chapter 8 verse 1** to **Chapter 12 verse 13** are written in **Hebrew**. It seems that this was a deliberate device on **Dani'el's** part. The sections of the book written in **Aaramaic** include the majority of **Dani'el's** personal history **(Chapters 2-3** and **5-6)**, the fall and rise of **Nebuchadnezzar**, and the prophecy about **the four kingdoms (Chapter 7)**.

Since **Aramaic** was the common language of that period, it seems logical that **Dani'el** would have recorded most of **his** personal history in that language. In fact, **Aramaic** was probably the language that **he** spoke. Official decrees were issued in **Aramaic** so that people from all parts of the empire could read them. So, it is not surprising that **Chapter 4** was written in Aramaic. Not only that, but **Chapters 2-6** concern **Gentile kings** whose activities would have been of interest to a world audience, so that material was written in a language that **non-Jews** could understand. Finally, the messages concerning the four **Gentile kingdoms** of **Chapter 7** involved not only **Isra'el**, but the whole world and thus were written in **Aramaic**.

Regarding the **Hebrew** in **Dani'el**, the introduction in **Chapter 1** was likely written in the prophet's native language because it reports the fate of three **Jewish** youths sent to Babylon in the final days of the southern kingdom of Judah, an account that would have been of little interest to a **Gentile** audience. Likewise, **Chapters 8-12** speak primarily of the fate of **the Jews** under tyrannical rulers, like Antiochus IV and the eschatological Antichrist, and would not have been relevant to the **Gentile** world of **Dani'el's** time. **Dani'el**, therefore, wrote this section in **Hebrew**, the language of **the Jews**.[4]

Literary Form: The prophecy of **Dani'el** is the first great book of apocalyptic literature in the Bible. The Greek word *apokalypsis*, from which comes the English word "apocalypse," means *an unveiling, a disclosing,* or *a revelation.* Though all Scripture is revelation from **ADONAI**, certain portions are unique in the form by which their revelations were given and in the means by which they were transmitted. Apocalyptic literature in the Bible has several characteristics: (1) In apocalyptic literature a person who received God's truths in visions and recorded what he saw. (2) Apocalyptic literature makes extensive use of symbols or signs

(see the commentary on **Revelation Ae – The Use of Symbols in the book of Revelation**). (3) Such literature normally gives revelation concerning **God's** program for the future of **His people Isra'el**. (4) Prose is usually employed in apocalyptic literature, rather than the poetic style which was normal in most prophetic literature.[6]

Key verse: Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place (Dani'el 9:24).

The use of ADONAI: Long before **Yeshua's** day, the word **ADONAI** had, out of respect, been substituted in speaking and in reading aloud for **God's** personal name, the four Hebrew letters *yod-heh-vav-heh*, variously written in English as **YHVH**. **The Talmud (Pesachim 50a) made it a requirement not to pronounce the Tetragrammaton**, meaning the four-letter name of **the LORD**, *Yod-Hey-Vav-Hey,* since the ancient manuscripts do not give any vowel sounds, and this remains the rule in most modern **Jewish** settings. In deference to this tradition, which is unnecessary but harmless, I will be using **ADONAI** where **YHVH** is meant. In ancient times when the scribes were translating the Hebrew Scriptures, they revered the name of **YHVH** so much that they would use a quill to make one stroke of the name and then throw it away. Then they would make another stroke and throw that quill away until the name was completed. **His** name became so sacred to them that they started to substitute the phrase *the Name*, instead of writing or pronouncing **His Name**. Over centuries of doing this, the actual letters and pronunciation of **His Name** were lost. The closest we can come is **YHVH**, with no vowels. The pronunciation has been totally lost. Therefore, the name Yahweh is only a guess of what the original name sounded like. Both **ADONAI** and **Ha'Shem** are substitute names for **YHVH**. **ADONAI** is more of an affectionate name like *daddy*, while **Ha'Shem** is a more formal name like *sir*. Therefore, **Jews**, being respectful of the Third Commandment, use these words as replacements. **The Talmud explains, "In the Sanctuary, the Name was pronounced as written; but beyond its confines a substitute Name was employed (Tractate Sotah VII.6). God** has only one name, **YHVH**. All **His** other "names" like **ADONAI Elohei-Tzva'ot**, **ADONAI Elohim**, **ADONAI Nissi**, **ADONAI Tzidkenu**, and **ADONAI-Tzva'ot**, merely reflect **His** attributes.

Contrary to what some religious groups say today, no one can say with confidence how to pronounce **God's Name**. The "name" Jehovah, for example, is a made-up

word by a Franciscan monk in the dark ages. He took **YHVH**, and inserted vowels between the known letters to invent a new word: **Y**e**H**o**V**a**H**. **Jews** never, NEVER, use this made-up word. The last book of the B’rit Chadashah tells us that when **Yeshua** returns to the earth, **He** will reveal **the Name that no one knew but Himself (Revelation 19:12)**. It seems best to leave this lost pronunciation unresolved until the **Messiah** comes.

The use of TaNaKh: The Hebrew word **TaNaKh** is an acronym, based on the letters **T** (for ”Torah”),**N** (for “**N**evi’im,” the Prophets), and **K** (for “**K**etuvim,” the Sacred Writings). It is the collection of the teachings of **God** to human beings in document form. The term “Old Covenant” implies that it is no longer valid, or at the very least outdated. Something old, to be either ignored or discarded. But **Jesus Himself** said: **Don’t think I have come to abolish the Torah and the Prophets; I have not come to abolish but to complete (Matthew 5:17 CJB).** I will be using the Hebrew acronym **TaNaKh** instead of the phrase the Old Testament, throughout this devotional commentary.

The Use of the phrase, “the righteous of the TaNaKh,” rather than using Old Testament saints: Messianic synagogues, and the **Jewish** messianic community in general, never use the phrase Old Testament saints. From a **Jewish** perspective, they prefer to use the phrase, “righteous of **the TaNaKh**.” Therefore, I will be using “the righteous of **the TaNaKh**,” rather than Old Testament saints throughout this devotional commentary.